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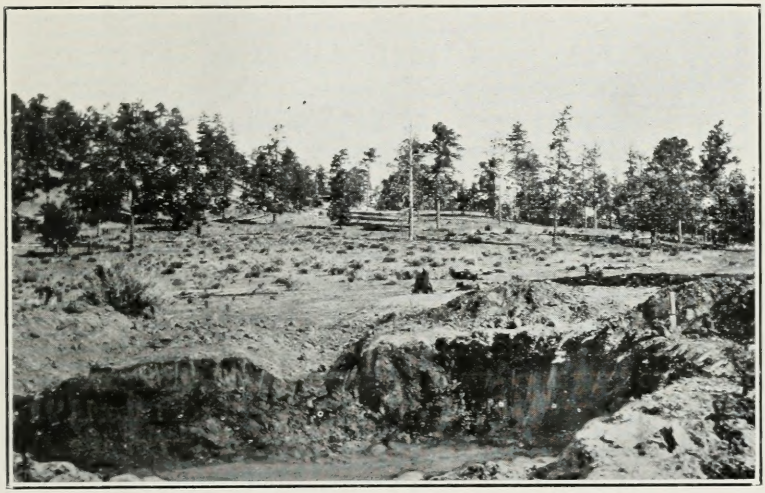

EXCAVATION OF A PIT DWELLING IN SOUTHWESTERN NEW MEXICO

UNCOVERING THE FIRST AMERICANS

E. B. Renaud of Denver University,
in The Forum

In 1539, when the first Spanish explorers ventured north from Mexico into what is now the southwestern part of the United States, they found the country in the possesion of the Pueblo Indians, the same race long famous as the "Cliff Dwellers". Indeed, the first "white man" to enter that country,—he was, in fact, a Spanish-speaking Negro named Esteban,—was captured and killed at one of the stone-built cities in which these Pueblo people dwelt, for these Americans of so long ago were the inventors of the apartment house idea, the first people in the world to build their dwellings piled one on top of the other like the tiers of modern flats.

But these Pueblos were not the first Americans; not even the first ones we know about. Long, long before the Spanish times, the Pueblos themselves had been invaders into the Southwest. Underneath the ruins of the oldest of their stone cities modern scientists began, some years ago, to find signs of a still earlier habitation; records of a race that had occupied the land perhaps as much as four thousand years ago, a race which the

ancestors of the Pueblos seem to have conquered and displaced.

Because the chief art of these very ancient people was the making of good basketry they have come to be called the "Basket Makers". Traces of them have been found at numerous sites, notably in the San Juan Valley, in Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah. The splendid reports of Alfred Vincent Kidder and of S. J. Guernsey have revealed to us in fine detail the principal arts and habits and characteristics of these most primitive Americans whom we know.

But, if the archeologists have done much for the recovery of the material culture of these ancient people, the physical anthropologists have lagged. So far, practically nothing has been published to give us any accurate idea of their physical appearance and racial type. We begin to know a good deal of what they produced, of how they lived, of their skill in various industrial arts, even of their artistic and creative impulses. We have not yet endeavored, very seriously, to find out how they looked, to what tribes and races they were related, their possible origins and migrations; to discover, in a word, what manner of men and women they were.

It was in the hope of learning something of these matters that I began my study of four skulls which once belonged to individuals of this Basket Maker race and which are now preserved

in the State Museum at Denver, a part of the collections of the State Historical and Natural History Society of Colorado. Two of these skulls were found in southwestern Colorado. The other two, one of them fragmentary, came to the museum from a site a little farther south, in New Mexico.

All four of these skulls differ from the skulls of the later Pueblo Indians,—the Pueblos of the stone cities,—in one very remarkable way. They are not deformed. This naturalness of shape is unknown among the Pueblos. All Pueblo babies were carried by their mothers strapped fast to a board. This custom forced the bones at the back of the head to grow in an abnormal, flattened fashion which is quite clearly evident in every Pueblo cranium recovered from the graveyards of the ancient cities. The preceding Basket Makers evidently lacked this custom. The four skulls of the Denver Museum, as well as other skulls believed to belong to the Basket Maker race and preserved in other museums, still have their natural shape undistorted by the cradle board or by any similar contrivance.

The most interesting feature of these four Basket Maker skulls is found in some suggestions which we are able to deduce as to their racial affinities. Without attempting to summarize from the scientific publications details of cranial, facial, and nasal indices, and similar diagnostic

evidence, it may be said that the four skulls which we possess at Denver are quite similar in shape and in character to another series of Basket Maker skulls found in the San Juan Basin in Colorado, which series has been measured and studied by Dr. E. A. Hooton, of Harvard. Thanks are due to Dr. Hooton for kindly permitting me to use his measurments for comparison.

Still other skulls possessing the shape and characters indicative of the Basket Maker race have been found at points in southern Colorado, in northwestern New Mexico, in northeastern Arizona, and in southern Utah. All these localities fall within a somewhat restricted area, which area may be considered, at least until we obtain further information, as the typical locality for this ancient race. It was in the river valleys of this part of our Southwest that the Basket Makers preceded the Pueblos. It is here that the ancient baskets and the bones of their makers are found to underlie the pottery and stone tools and, ultimately, the skeletons of those later apartment-dwellers who had already abandoned their cliff-perched abodes when Padre Escalante first explored that part of the country for the Spanish Dons.

But even outside this typical Basket area of our Southwest, we have a few indications of an ancient American race which must have been, if not identical with the Basket Makers, at least

very similar to them in appearance and bodily character. Among these localities wider afield there is, in particular, one in the Santa Barbara Islands and on the Pacific Coast. A large collection of skulls from this Pacific area is preserved in the Peabody Museum at Harvard. Another locality where excavators have found skulls resembling the Basket Maker type is in the state of Coahuila in Old Mexico. And finally, it appears that in parts of South America, such as the costal regions of Ecuador and Chile, in Patagonia and in Brazil, searchers have found skulls of very similar character to the others which we are discussing. Even among the remains of the former Iroquois and Algonkian Indians, in what is now the eastern part of the United States, Professor R. D. Dixon records the discovery of traces, perhaps referable to this same racial stock.

All this evidence points to the conclusion that the people of Basket Maker culture, having relatively long heads, always undeformed, represent an important type or stock antedating the more recent culture and physical type of the Pueblos,—a racial stock which was once widely scattered over the southwestern portion of North America. The evidence indicates, further, that the groups of Basket Maker prehistoric population, which have been identified definitely in the Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona area, may not have been in reality as isolated as the paucity

of remains might make us believe. It looks surprisingly as though the widely separated ocurrences of undeformed, pre-Pueblo skulls were really parts of one general population which existed over a considerable part of the two Americas before the city-building Pueblos arrived to trouble the peace of the land.

Luck and systematic explorations may lead to important discoveries in coming years. Various considerations suggest that cultural relations must have been established, very early, between the Basket Maker area of the San Juan watershed and the Mexican country farther to the south, from which Mexican country the great American agricultural plant of Indian corn is believed to have come.

There is no doubt in my mind that southern Colorado, northwestern New Mexico, and possibly southwestern New Mexico, would be fertile fields for careful explorers searching out the Basket Maker remains. In addition, the typical Basket Maker sites which lie westward of the Colorado River may prove to be connecting links with the ancient populations of the same cranial type which once spread along the Pacific Coast and left their remains in the Santa Barbara area. Furthermore, the region between Coahuila in Old Mexico and the Santa Barbara area of southern California is very little known to archeologists and may hide other important burial caves,

the contents of which will help us to reconstruct the picture of these ancient times. Perhaps as time goes on, and as the spades of the archeologists turn up more and more of the relic-laden soil, we will be able to fill in all the gaps, to trace the presence of these basket-making First Americans throughout all the countries the usufruct of which they once enjoyed.

Where did these First Americans come from? Were they really the very first in our continent, or must we look for other and different races now utterly lost which preceded them? These questions it is still too soon to answer. There is some most suggestive evidence, however, as to the possible racial affinities of the Basket Makers elsewhere in the world. These affinities point to Melanesia, to Papua, and to the other great islands of the southwestern Pacific, possibly to Australia itself.

If you were to show to any anthropologist the measurements of the four skulls in the Denver Museum and to ask him where in the present world you would be most likely to find a living individual whose skull would match these measurements, the anthropologist would not need to hesitate long for his answer. He would send you, undoubtedly, to Papua or to Australia. There you would find, the existing skull data indicate, a reasonable proportion of individuals whose bony head structure would resemble in most of

the measurements, if not in all of them, the skulls that we have here in Denver and the similar skulls which Dr. Hooton and others have preserved and studied elsewhere.

While by no means conclusive, this similarity with the existing racial stocks of the southern Pacific is most suggestive. It seems plausible to imagine that adventurers from across the Pacific may have reached America and peopled it, more or less completely, far back in those forgotten days of four or five thousand years ago. A new and interesting discovery made by Dr. Paul Rivet, of Paris, reenforces this suggestion. The distinguished French savant finds what he believes to be clear resemblances between the vocabularies of the Malayo-Polynesian languages and the new Hokan group of North American languages. He finds also similarities between the Australian speech and the Tson language of South America.

The Hokan group of languages represents six dialects, believed by Dixon and Kroeber to belong to one common stock. One of these six dialects called the Chumash was spoken by the natives of the Santa Barbara Islands and of the facing California coast. That is the very place of origin of the Indian skulls identified (by Hooton) as being of the same general type as the skulls of the Basket Maker people from the typical area of the southwest. Furthermore, the Tson lang-

uage of South America is spoken by a people believed to be related, as descendants, to the ancient South American population, also identified as Basket Maker type.

There is good hope, therefore, that linguistic studies will come to the aid of the anthropologists, and will help to strengthen the tentative conclusion which can be drawn from the study of the Basket Maker skulls,—the conclusion that the remote ancestors of the First Americans were related to peoples who still live in the Islands of Oceania. The original home of the people, the routes by which they migrated to America, the time when they came and settled, their history during the centuries before they were overwhelmed by the Pueblos,—these are some of the alluring problems which still await the industry and acumen of students of our mysterious southwest.

IT IS WRITTEN

National Museum Report

Earlier than usual, the annual report of the United States Museum is from press. In the introduction, Assistant Secretary Alexander Wetmore restates something of the history and purposes of the founders of the Museum, saying, for instance: "The museum idea was fundamental

in the organic act establishing the Smithsonian Institution, which was based upon a twelve years' discussion in Congress and the advice of the most distinguished scientific men, educators, and intellectual leaders of the Nation during the years of 1834 to 1846. It is interesting to note how broad and comprehensive were the views which actuated the Congress in determining the scope of the Museum, a fact especially remarkable when it is recalled that at that date no museum of considerable size existed in the United States, and the museums of England and of the continent of Europe, although containing many rich collections, were still to a large extent without a developed plan. The Congress which passed the act of foundation enumerated as within the scope of the Museum 'all objects of art and of foreign and curious research and all objects of natural history, plants, and geological and mineralogical specimens belonging to the United States,' thus indicating the Museum at the very outset as the Museum of the United States and as one of the widest range in its activities. * * * The maintenance of the Museum was long ago assumed by Congress, the Smithsonian Institution taking upon itself only so much of the necessary responsibility for its administration as is required to coordinate it with its other activities. The Museum as a part of the Smithsonian is an integral part of a broad organization for increase and

diffusion of knowledge, for scientific research, for cooperation with the departments of the Government, with universities and scientific societies in America, and with all scientific institutions and men abroad who seek interchange of views with men of science in the United States. Since 1846 the only material changes in the scope of the National Museum have been (1) the addition of a department of American history, intended to illustrate, by an appropriate assemblage of objects, important events, the domestic life of the country from the colonial period to the present time, and the lives of distinguished personages, and (2) provision, in 1920, for the separate administration of the National Gallery of Art as a coordinate unit under the Smithsonian Institution. * * * The development of the Museum has been greatest in those subjects which the condition of the past three-quarters of a century have made most fruitful--the natural history, geology, ethnology and archaeology of the United States, which have been supplemented by many collections from other countries. * * * Public interest in the growth and development of the National Museum is reflected in a steady increase of recorded attendance, and in correspondents and requests for information." It is thus seen how closely the government purposes and experiences of the National Museum parallel those of the Museum of New Mexico. The appropri-

ation by Congress for the maintenance of the Museum last year amounted to $584,792. The number of visitors to the Museum during the year was 1,022,003. The Museum's services to the Nation are classified under four headings in the report:

1. Care and preservation of collections.
2. Public exhibitions from the collections.
3. Research work.
4. Publication.

The publication of the year covered five large volumes, seventy papers and new editions of handbooks and guide books. Next to salaries the largest expenditures were for publications of which 104,596 copies were distributed.

Radio talks, lectures and entertainments are part of the Museum program, but the report says: "Although the National Museum does not at present sponsor definite lecture or entertainment programs of its own, since available funds do not permit the necessary expenditures for maintenance of such educational features, it offers its auditorium and lecture rooms to other governmental, patriotic, and scientific agencies and assists as far as possible in providing facilities for meetings. The assembly rooms are thus in more or less constant use. Meetings and conventions have been numerous during the year."

Walter Hough, head curator, of the Department of Anthropology introduces his report with:

"On a monetary basis the collections of anthropology in the United States National Museum are estimated to be worth several million dollars, but in practical value their worth is more in that they contribute definitely to knowledge by increasing the scientific outlook of the world, by performing an educational duty, by preserving evidences of the progress of man in the arts, and through practical applications in the material welfare of society. Additional material in these collections is accumulating slowly through various governmental and other agencies. Opportunity of increase in anthropological material is greater now than it will ever be again, as growing interest in this subject narrows and exhausts the sources. * * * Anthropology is particularly adapted to museum science on account of the general interest of its exhibits to the public. In some European countries this aspect of anthropology has been appreciated to an extent that has led to the founding of great individual museums showing the material of the science. As anthropology includes in its field the primitive data bearing upon the historical development of most of the other sciences, it is a contributor to and conserver of information important to other branches."

That the National Museum works under the same difficulties as the Museum of New Mexico

for lack of adequate financial support is apparent from the following: "After proper care of the collections, research is a primary function and duty. Without it the Museum would fail in its intent, and in proportion as all the collections are worked and reported upon, the Museum fulfills its purpose as a scientific institution. Unfortunately, the staff is numerically inadequate to cover the entire field of the two organic kingdoms, and whole phyla are lying fallow because appropriations are lacking to employ more workers. * * * Research work in the divisions must be secondary to the curatorial work, and as curatorial duties are constantly increasing while the personnel remains stationary, the time left for research is proportionately decreasing." Each year, the report mentions the work of Dr. Frank Springer in the field of paleontology and again this time it says: "Dr. Frank Springer, whose work has been much retarded by illness, has nevertheless made good progress in his studies of the Silurian crinoids of the Ohio Valley and hopes to complete his monograph within the coming year." Two monographs by Dr. Springer were published during the year:

Occurrence of the crinoid genus Apiocrinus in America: Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., vol. 67, art. 18, no. 2590, Apr. 8, 1925, pp. 1-5, pl. 1.

The genus Pentacrinus in Alaska: Proc. U. S.

Nat. Mus., vol. 67, art. 5, no. 2577, May 22, 1925, pp. 1-7, pl. 1.

It is pleasing to note how much of the work of the National Museum is directed to fields in the Southwest and how many of those contributing to the National Museum's splendid achievements are wellknown and connected in some way or other with the Museum of New Mexico and the School of American Research. A review of that feature of the report is reserved for a later issue of *El Palacio*.

MUSEUM EVENTS

June Exhibits

Fifteen water colors by H. B. Tschudy of the Brooklyn Museum, were foremost, perhaps, among the June exhibits at the Museum. Mr. Tschudy, who visited the Museum during the month, knows the Southwest well and his landscapes are not only authoritative but in their emphasis of masses and form as well as truth of color convey something of the atmosphere and spirit as well as grandeur of such spectacular formations as those of the Grand Canyon, Zion and Bryce Canyons, the Navajo Country and the Rockies, while in "Gathering Storm", "A Shower, New Mexico," and "Afternoon Wind" there is an intimation of the moods of the seasons in the

Southwest. Altogether charming, too, are compositions like "Feeding the Ponies", "A Desert Camp", and "Old Timers." Emilie Scherzel of the Santa Fe artist group, during June, exhibited five Indian portraits, sixteen lanscapes and a still life, all evidence of conscientious workmanship and great talent. Especially, in picturing desert, mountain and pueblo, is Miss Scherzel very happy with her brush. Ellis Fremont again delights with his latest work, large canvases of the aspects of nature in the Southwestern forests and mountains, sometimes somber and always dramatic. Lon Megargee has on exhibit an impressive painting of the Arizona Desert, shimmering in the heat of summer, with alkali dust rising in clouds where the prairie schooner labors through the sand. Carl Redin's landscapes and Miss Pickard's pictures of the Cliff Dwelling country are pleasing variations of the treatment of Southwestern landscape by Southwestern artists.

Indian Theater

The School of American Research is much pleased with the initial work done to prepare the site of the Indian Theater in Fiesta Park so that it can be utilized for the Fiesta ceremonials in August. The work was in charge of a committee of the Fiesta Council, Mr. Carl A. Bishop

of Santa Fe being chairman of the committee. Samuel Hudelson, superintendent of construction of the School directed the workmen and the engineering. An area of about ten acres was enclosed with a fence which runs just underneath the ridges enclosing the cove that forms a natural amphitheater. Large amounts of earth had to be removed in order to obtain the proper slopes for the terraces upon which the benches for the spectators will be placed, and to level the ground for the stage. As most of the dirt removed was a hard conglomerate, there had to be considerable blasting. The City authorities and the State Penitentiary gave the services of prisoners for digging postholes for the fence posts and other work. In a few weeks and at the expenditure of less than Two Thousand Dollars contributed by 62 citizens who gave from $5 to $200 each, impressive results have been obtained. The amphitheater with its tiers of terraces that appear to be hewn into the solid hill sides is ready for the Indian ceremonies and Fiesta spectacles. Above it towers the Cross of the Martyrs erected to commemorate the martyrdom of fifty-one Franciscans who lost their lives in bringing the gospel to the Indians of the Southwest. To the east the magnificent Sangre de Cristo Range reaching an altitude of 13,000 feet forms a sublime background for the ceremonies. To the south are the towers and roofs of Santa

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Fe embowered in the foliage of summer while beyond are the beautiful Sandias, Ortiz, San Pedro, San Ysidro and Cerrillos mountains. To the west rise the majestic Jemez, Valles, Cochiti and parallel ranges. It is a setting of marvelous charm, perhaps, unequaled anywhere else in the world. As the first of the structures of the group that will eventually form part of this splendid out-of-door theater, a kiva which is to serve as dressing room for the Indians taking part in the ceremonies, is to be built if the means can be made available. Any contributions should be addressed to Carl A. Bishop, Chairman Indian Theater Committee, Santa Fe, N. M.

First Fiesta Reservation

From Miss Nellie Barnes, the author and a member of the faculty of the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kas., comes the first check for Fiesta ticket reservation this year. Miss Barnes has been a visitor in Santa Fe repeatedly and here gathered some of the material for her book on Indian rhythms.

PERSONAL MENTION

Director Returns

Dr. Edgar L. Hewett returned from San Diego on June 11 and announced the program and plans for the Summer School.

Honors for Ufer

Walter Ufer of the Taos Society of Artists has returned to his studio in Taos after a winter and spring in New York, Philadelphia and Chicago. He will return east in fall in time for the International Exhibition at Pittsburgh, at which he will serve on the jury. He was the recipient of an Altman prize at the last Academy show and served in connection with the Sesquicentennial at Philadelphia.

Neil Judd Visits

Neil M. Judd of the Bureau of American Ethnology was a visitor in Santa Fe on his way to the Chaco Canyon where he is in charge of the work for the National Geographical Society.

IN THE FIELD

Indian Cemetery Site at La Jolla

Graders who dug up skulls and bones in subdivision operations north of La Jolla have not uncovered the relics of a prehistoric civilization but instead have dug into an old cemetery used by the Indians who inhabited the shore at the time of the Mission fathers, Dr. Edgar L. Hewett, well known anthropologist and director of the San Diego museum, announced yesterday after an inspection of the remains. "A preliminary examination of the skeletons that are being uncovered in the grading now going on at La Jolla shores shows them to be Indian remains in a good state of preservation in sufficient quantity to indicate that the graders are cutting through an Indian cemetery," Dr. Hewett said.

"There are bones of seven to ten individuals already uncovered," the anthropologist continued. "The skeletons, both male and female, are of per-

sons of varying ages, one or two of quite advanced years. They are typical skeletons of the tribes that inhabited this coast at the time of the coming of Father Junipero Serra and who have dwindled to the few remnants remaining in our back country.

"The freedom of the bones from pathological conditions would indicate that they belong to the time prior to the coming of the white people. Bones of the later time frequently show the ravages of the infectious diseases introduced by the Europeans. The teeth show the characteristic wearing down caused by eating food containing much sand, acorns and other seeds ground in sandstone mortars, and sea foods likewise full of grit.

"Spindrift hotel is build upon an old village site probably occupied for centuries during the seasons when the sea furnished the principal supply of food. The dell that graders are working in was doubtless the site of early 'rancherias', established at the instance of the Franciscan fathers in order that the Indians might be brought together for religious influence. In fact, there are abundant traditions to the effect that the Indians formerly lived here and that bands continued to come for temporary encampments down to comparatively recent times.

"It is more than likely that a search through early records of this region would disclose interesting facts concerning these settlements. It is probable that Indians still living in San Diego county have preserved in memory the name of the 'rancherias' at this place. Moreover, it is possible that the fathers may have named this place La Hoya, which could have designated the deep dell (valle hondo) embraced on three sides by the hills and on the other by the sea, or could have referred to the place of sepulture now being cut into by the grading machines of the La Jolla shores. One hestitates to suggest that our beautiful La Jolla could have derived its name any other way than by description of its perfect setting. La Joya, a jewel set in gold or silver is all right. So would be La Hoya, the dell."—San Diego Union.

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Cleveland Museum

"It seems incredible," says the May issue of The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art, 'that this Museum should suffer within one week two such losses as the death of our President, J. H. Wade, and of our First Vice President, Ralph King. The loss is the more severe because they were not only our two highest officials;

they were also leaders, active in interest and in contributions. Each has poured a steady stream of treasures into the collections." This issue is enriched by reproductions of engravings, lithographs, bronzes which had been presented to the Museum by Mr. King. The eighth annual exhibition of work by Cleveland Artists and Craftsmen is reviewed, demonstrating that Cleveland is a "creative art center". There were 210 exhibitors. "Memories of Andalusia" by Henry G. Keller, received the special prize for the finest single picture in the exhibition, while another exceptional award went to Frank N. Wilcox, for "St. Servan," adjudged the best landscape. Louise B. Maloney received the first prize in the portrait class.

National Academy Of Sciences

Among the papers read at the annual meeting of the National Academy of Sciences at Washington, D. C., was "Objectives of a fundamental Study of Middle American Civilization" (illustrated), by John C. Merriam and Sylvanus G. Morley.